



Rock Talk

The Official Newsletter of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds

The 17 Best Spots For Gem Hunting In Arkansas In 2023

Gem hunting is an exciting and rewarding activity, and we've proven that Arkansas is one of the best places to do it! The Natural State is home to various beautiful and valuable gems, and with its varied topography, there are plenty of places to look for them (even Diamonds!).

From the Ozark Mountains to the Ouachita Mountains, beginner gem miners and expert hunters can find stunning landscapes to explore and search for gems. So, prepare your tools and grab your friends! There are plenty of opportunities for gem mining in Arkansas just waiting for you to discover.

The parks, creeks, rivers, mines, caves, and mountains are the best places to look for gems in our state. We've covered in great detail below our favorite spots, including Crater of Diamonds State Park, Wegner Quartz Crystal Mines, Prairie Creek, Board Camp Crystal Mine, and Sweet Surrender Crystals.

Read the entire article at RockChasing.com



This Month's Roundup of Stories

- [Arkansas Gem Hunting](#)
- [Secretary's Report](#)
- [Moss Agate](#)
- [Gothic Cemetery](#)
- [Cabachon Class](#)
- [Detectorist Finds Gold](#)
- [Prasiolite](#)
- [Bench Tips](#)

And, while on the subject of Arkansas gem mines, around the first of September, a young girl was celebrating her 7th birthday at the Crater of Diamonds State Park in Murfreesboro, and found a 2.95 carat diamond! Part of the story and a link below.

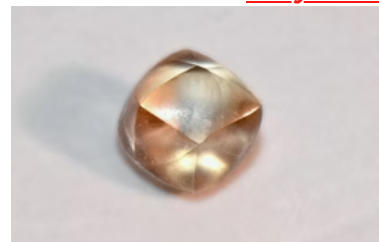
A seven year old girl got the best birthday gift ever when she found a 2.95-carat diamond at an Arkansas State Park.

Aspen Brown was at the Crater of Diamonds State Park in Murfreesboro last Friday, when she made the discovery.

The youngster from Paragould was celebrating her seventh birthday with her dad and grandmother, but had no idea she would end up finding the second largest diamond recorded this year at an Arkansas state park.

The diamond is the first large diamond registered since the completion of an excavation project at the park last month.

Read the entire article at DailyMail.UK



Secretary's Report

Minutes and More from Club Secretary - Melodye Steverson

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Monthly Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Date 8-9-23

The meeting was called to order by President Judith Birx at 7:02 pm. We all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence. There were 2 new members to recognize: Christine Jackson and Denise Dolobach. There were 2 guests in attendance: "Just Marty" and Pat. Roger Wheeler made a motion to accept the minutes of our July meeting as printed in the newsletter, Carla Howell seconded. Passed by all members. Treasurer Janet Wheeler gave the Treasurer's report. Janice Wojcik made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report subject to audit. Seconded by Rachel Blank. Approved by all.

President Birx began with announcements:
The Silversmithing class on the 19th is full, but members may sign up to be included in the next class.

The cabochon classes are continuing and members may sign up for the next classes coming up.

The Free wire wrapping class has been postponed for now.

Lauren Bell stated there is a new owner of the Rose Hill Mine in Franklin, NC and she thinks the mine is better than ever now with access to fresh rough direct from the mine.

Gem Show co-Chairman Janice Wojcik reminded members to sign up for tables at the show before September 1st. After that date, the tables will be filled from our wait list of vendors.

Rachel Blank made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Lauren Bell seconded, passed by all.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:17 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson.

No Board of Directors Meeting minutes, as there was no BoD meeting for the month.



**Clubhouse Address:
3357 Susan Dr.
Spring Hill, FL 34606**

Moss Agate

Moss Agate is a unique and captivating variety of chalcedony, which is a form of quartz mineral. It is characterized by its translucent to semi-translucent appearance, featuring various shades of green, often resembling moss or fern-like inclusions.

These inclusions are actually minerals, most commonly hornblende or other manganese and iron-based minerals, which give the stone its distinctive appearance.

Moss Agate is typically cut and polished into cabochons, beads, and other jewelry pieces, as well as ornamental objects.

Moss Agate has a rich history and has been treasured by various cultures for its aesthetic appeal and perceived metaphysical properties.

Here are some historical and cultural uses of Moss Agate:

- **Ancient Civilizations:** Moss Agate has been used by ancient civilizations for its believed healing and protective properties. It was often worn as an amulet or talisman to ward off negative energies and bring good fortune.
- **Medieval Europe:** During the Middle Ages, Moss Agate was used in Europe to promote agricultural prosperity. It was placed in fields and gardens to encourage healthy plant growth and bountiful harvests.

- **Native American and Indigenous Cultures:** Native American cultures revered Moss Agate for its connection to nature and the earth. It was used in rituals and ceremonies to communicate with spirits and enhance the connection between humans and the natural world.
- **Lapidary and Jewelry:** Throughout history, Moss Agate has been used to create intricate and beautiful jewelry pieces, including pendants, rings, and beads. Its distinctive appearance and calming colors make it a popular choice for both casual and more elaborate jewelry designs.

Moss Agate's historical significance and cultural uses showcase its enduring appeal and connection to various aspects of human life. Whether appreciated for its aesthetic beauty, spiritual qualities, or historical symbolism, Moss Agate continues to captivate and inspire people around the world.

Moss Agate's beauty, historical significance, and unique characteristics make it a captivating and sought-after gemstone with a variety of uses in both practical and spiritual contexts.

Read the entire article at [GeologyScience.com](https://www.geologyscience.com)





LIQUIDATION EXTRAVAGANZA

We're cleaning out the closets, emptying the buckets, and all of our Rockhounds will benefit! At the Wednesday September 13th meeting, we're liquidating all of the estate rocks, contributed rocks, every single rock in the closet. There are some really good specimens and they'll all be spread out on the back table.

Everyone who signs in will get one free raffle ticket. If you want to improve your chances of getting FREE rocks, you can purchase more tickets. When your number is called, you only have 30 seconds to choose a rock. We'll keep calling out numbers until the rocks on the tables are all gone. If the numbers are all gone, we'll start all over 'til the tables are empty. Everyone will go home with a FREE specimen!



Excavations Uncover Gothic Cemetery Filled With Ornate Jewelry

According to a press announcement by park authorities, the cemetery was first identified by Olaf Popkiewicz, an archaeologist and content creator who runs a YouTube Channel with over 65,000 followers. Popkiewicz found traces of the site during a preliminary study near the village of Stara Rzeka, leading to a full scale survey over an area of 250 square metres in the Wda Landscape Park. Archaeologists found 50 ancient burials that date from the 4th century AD, a period when the region was inhabited by the Goths.

The Goths were a Germanic ethnic group that significantly contributed to the decline of the Western Roman Empire and the dawn of medieval Europe. In the Gothic language, the Goths were called the *Gut-piuda ('Gothic people') or *Gutans ('Goths'). A people called the Gutones, possibly early Goths associated with the Wielbark culture, are documented living near the lower Vistula River in Poland during the 1st century AD.

Excavations have uncovered numerous high status grave goods, including two silver necklaces, two silver fibulae, a necklace made from silver beads, jewellery with a snake motif, and a perfectly preserved urn.

According to the announcement: "This constitutes only a small fragment of the site area which we estimate to be over 2.4 acres. Unfortunately, the conditions of a large part of the cemetery means that urgent excavations are needed to help save and preserve the site."

Previous studies in the area have found a Gothic settlement near the village of Osie, with a well-preserved spacial arrangement of objects that date from the 4th century AD.

Read the entire article at [HeritageDaily.com](https://www.heritagedaily.com)



Cabochon Classes!

Here are pictures of what my Cabochon students have been up to in the last 3 weeks. I have been fortunate to have some very talented people in my classes during this 3 month series and have enjoyed teaching and watching them evolve into eager, adventurous stone cutters! There is nothing better than having your students come to class excited to be there and anxious to learn. Unfortunately, I must end the Cab classes for now to prepare for my show season, but I will be looking forward to resuming classes when I can. Thank you students! I can't wait to see how you progress!

CABBERS ROCK!

Melodye



Hailey



What my students did when I told them this was the last class



James



James



Anthony



Class at work



Anthony

Field Trips

"Note: The Withlacoochee Rockhounds Club does not sponsor field trips other than trips that are sanctioned by the SFMS (The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies).

Our club insurance is through SFMS and does not cover excursions not listed on their website as safe."

Amateur makes 'gold find of the century' in Norway

A Norwegian out walking on doctors' advice unearthed rare 6th-century gold jewellery using a newly bought metal detector, a discovery archaeologists said was Norway's "gold find of the century".

"At first I thought it was chocolate coins or Captain Sabertooth coins," said 51-year-old Erlend Bore, referring to a fictional Norwegian pirate.

"It was totally unreal."

The cache comprised nine Norwegian gold medallions and gold pearls that once formed an opulent necklace, as well as three gold rings.

Archaeologists say the find is unique because of the design on the medallions -- a type of horse from Norse mythology.

Bore, who dreamt of becoming an archaeologist as a child, made the discovery on a farmer's land near Stavanger in August after he bought a metal detector on his doctors' recommendations to get more exercise.

He had been out searching and was about to head home for the day when the device suddenly began beeping on a hillside.

He called archaeologists, who took over the search.

The jewels, which weigh a little more than 100 grammes, were discovered to date from around 500 AD.

"It's the gold find of the century in Norway," said Ole Madsen, the head of the University of Stavanger's Museum of Archaeology.

"To find that much gold all at once is extremely unusual."

The most recent comparable find in Norway dates back to the 19th century.

"Given the location of the discovery and what we know from other similar finds, this is probably a matter of either hidden valuables or an offering to the gods during dramatic times," professor Hakon Reiersen said.

In line with Norwegian law, both Bore and the landowner will receive a reward although the sum has not yet been determined.

Read the entire article at [France24.com](https://www.france24.com)



Prasiolite (Green Amethyst)

Prasiolite is a unique and captivating gemstone known for its beautiful green hue and is sometimes referred to as "green amethyst." It is a type of quartz that derives its distinctive color from natural heat treatment, often resulting from volcanic or geothermal activity. This green variety of quartz has gained popularity in the world of jewelry due to its appealing appearance.

In modern times, prasiolite has gained popularity as an attractive and affordable green gemstone. It is often used in contemporary jewelry designs, ranging from rings and necklaces to earrings and bracelets. Some people also associate prasiolite with metaphysical properties like healing and emotional balance, although these beliefs are not scientifically proven.

Prasiolite's unique green color and relatively low cost compared to other green gemstones have made it a desirable choice for those seeking a touch of green elegance in their jewelry collections, whether for fashion or spiritual purposes.

Read the entire article at GeologyScience.com



Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Our monthly club meeting is held at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Club, 3357 Susan Dr., Spring Hill, FL 34606, on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM



www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com

Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk

The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month. Contact Michael Steverson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and the club website. It will benefit both your business and our club.

Advertisers Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website. The club can use the monthly income. Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members

Contact club treasure Janet Wheeler: ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com or send to: Withlacoochee Rockhounds, PO Box 9634, Spring Hill, FL 34611-6634

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Purpose

We are a non-profit organization whose purpose is to foster interest and promote knowledge of minerals, gems, fossils, lapidary arts, and earth sciences, through regular meetings, informative programs, workshops, and field trips. PLUS, our annual gem, mineral and jewelry show.

Membership is open to anyone sharing such interests.

Dues

Dues are \$35.00 annually for adults, and \$5.00 for children under 18 years of age.

Club Meeting Location and time

Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center, 3357 Susan Dr in Spring Hill. The meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00PM

2023 Club Officers and Appointees

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--|
| President | Judith Birx | 352.587.1702 | judithbirx@hotmail.com |
| Vice President | Janice Wojcik | 813.677.6263 | jfwojcik@verizon.net |
| Secretary | Melodye Steverson | 352.683.9496 | melodye@designsbymelodye.com |
| Treasurer | Janet Wheeler | 727.938.3644 | ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com |
| Rock Talk Editor | Michael Steverson | 407.376.5570 | highlander56@gmail.com |
| Club Webmaster | Michael Steverson | 407.376.5570 | highlander56@gmail.com |
| Mailing Reporter | Janet Wheeler | 727.938.3644 | ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com |
| Gem Bag Coordinator | Gloria DuPont | 352.848.5199 | ddupont@tampabay.rr.com |
| Audio/Visual Coordinator | Michael Steverson | 407.376.5570 | highlander56@gmail.com |

Board of Directors

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Judith Birx (President) | Janice Wojcik (Vice President) | Melodye Steverson (Secretary) | Janet Wheeler (Treasurer) |
| Roberta Oldread | Leslie Newberry | Roger Wheeler | Michael Steverson |
| | | | Ralph Barber (Past President) |



Brad Smith's *Bench Tips* are a monthly feature of Rock Talk

ONE PART DIE FORMING

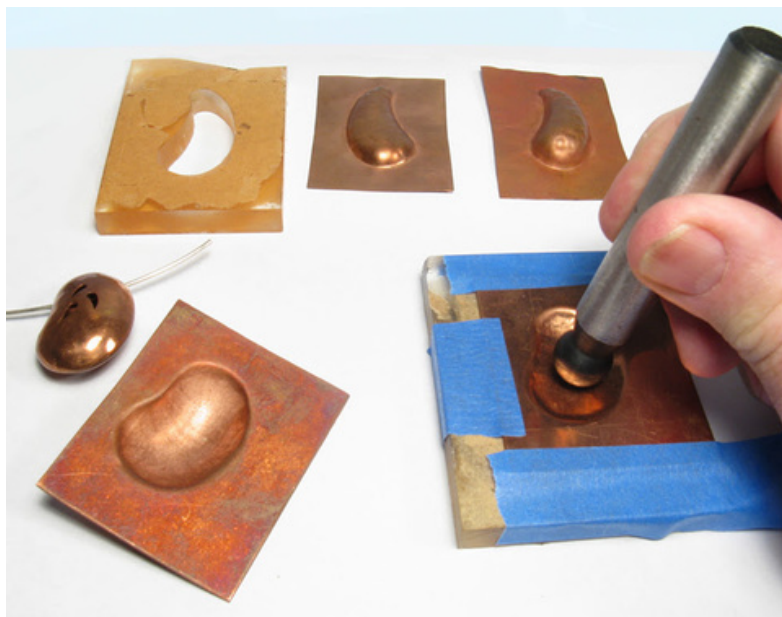
An easy way to make large and strong components for your jewelry designs while keeping the weight of precious metal to a minimum is done with simple tools in a process called one-part die forming. Complex 3-D shapes can be made quickly from thin gauge sheet with just a piece of plastic and a dapping ball.

I make a forming die by sketching the shape I need on a piece of thick plastic. Then drill a hole and saw out the shape with a jeweler's saw and a coarse blade. When sawing, try to keep edges straight up and down. Refine the cut as needed with a sanding drum or file. Select a thickness of plastic that is just a little more than the amount of doming you want.

> Note: I tend to use 1/4 inch or 3/8 inch plastic that I get as scraps from a local plastics shop.

To use the die, cut a piece of sheet about 3/8 inch wider than the hole in the die on all sides. Anneal the sheet and tape it down on the plastic. Use a dapping ball and hammer to create the domed shape. When the taped down edges begin to warp, planish them flat on the top of the die. Finally, if the sheet is to be domed deeply, you will need to anneal the metal occasionally.

One nice feature of this technique can be seen in the top and left of the picture. If the sawed walls are straight up and down, the hole on the bottom is a mirror image of the hole on the top. This allows you to produce a mirror image shape as needed to make left and right earrings or both sides of an irregular shaped bead as shown.



Learn New Skills with Brad's "How To Do It" Books

[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)

Rock Talk Funny Papers



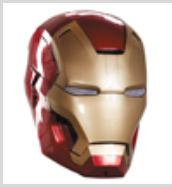
"THEY SAY GEMSTONES HAVE PROPERTIES FOR RELIEVING STRESS ... ONCE YOU GET PAST THE STRESS OF PAYING FOR THEM."



"We recommend that you get a ring of equal weight for the other hand to prevent improper alignment of your spine."



"The closest thing to precious stones he's ever had is kidney stones."



From The Editor

Hello to all Withlacoochee Rockhounds

It is I, your friendly neighborhood editor again.

If you missed our August 2023 meeting, you missed Space Rocks. Club Board member Leslie Newberry gave us a presentation of meteorites and other space rocks. Plus, if you were there, you left with a small meteorite. The presentation is available for viewing on the club's YouTube channel

If you would like to place a business card ad in the newsletter, please feel free to contact me, and we'll get you added to the next available issue.

Additionally, if any of you have not received your newsletter or are not receiving my e-mail blasts (meetings, rock sales, etc.), *please* check your spam folder. If you are still are not receiving them, please contact me, and let's make sure I have your correct e-mail address. I have a few of you who unsubscribed from the mailings. I cannot add you back to the list. You have to subscribe to get back on the list. It's a permissions thing.

Our Board would like our members to come up with suggestions for programs to be presented at our monthly meetings. What would you like to see? What would you like to learn? What would you like to know? Is there something you'd like to teach or present? You can help our club expand its educational repertoire. We'd love to hear from you all.

Contact any Board member or bring your written suggestions to a meeting.

Rock On!!!

Club Phone Number - 352.587.2714

Warning to Withlacoochee Rockhound Members

During the last several months, illicit requests have been sent to members of various clubs in the US, including the Withlacoochee Rockhounds, asking members to purchase gift cards that would be used as donations to various organizations.

These are SCAMS.

Be advised that our club has never and will never ask members to buy gift cards or provide any form of monetary funds to anyone or any organization by phone call, email, or any other method of communication.

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Contact Michael Stevenson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and
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your business and our club.

If your ad has a web address, or Etsy shop address, I have linked to it.

Advertisers Are Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website.

The monthly income from these ads is beneficial to the club.

Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members.

Contact club treasurer Janet Wheeler: ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com or

send to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

PO Box 5634 Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Membership Form

2023

Annual Dues: Individual member, \$35.00. Under 18 years of age, \$5.00

Check if returning member

Check if current member
with change of information

Check if new member

Check if under 18

Please Print Clearly

Last name

First Name

Street Address:

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You may now fill in the fields on this form if you are viewing it on your computer or tablet.
Each field may be clicked on and then you may type in your information.
You will still need to print out the form, but your added information should show on the form.

Give this completed form along with your check for dues made out to "Withlacoochee Rockhounds" to club secretary Janet Wheeler at a club meeting. Or mail the form and your check to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634
Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

2022